

notice of appeal shall stay the initial decision until the authority head decides the issue.

(i) If the defendant files a timely notice of appeal with the authority head, the presiding officer shall forward the record of the proceeding to the authority head.

(j) The authority head shall decide expeditiously whether extraordinary circumstances excuse the defendant's failure to file a timely answer based solely on the record before the presiding officer.

(k) If the authority head decides that extraordinary circumstances excused the defendant's failure to file a timely answer, the authority head shall remand the case to the presiding officer with instructions to grant the defendant an opportunity to answer.

(l) If the authority head decides that the defendant's failure to file a timely answer is not excused, the authority head shall reinstate the initial decision of the presiding officer, which shall become final and binding upon the parties 30 days after the authority head issues such decision.

**§ 1264.110 Referral of complaint and answer to the presiding officer.**

Upon receipt of an answer, the reviewing official shall file the complaint and answer with the presiding officer, and include the name and address of the attorney who will represent the authority before the presiding officer.

**§ 1264.111 Notice of hearing.**

(a) When the presiding officer receives the complaint and answer, the presiding officer shall promptly serve a notice of hearing upon the defendant in the manner prescribed by §1264.107. At the same time, the presiding officer shall send a copy of such notice to the representative of the authority.

(b) Such notice shall include—

(1) The tentative time and place, and the nature of the hearing;

(2) The legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held;

(3) The matters of fact and law asserted;

(4) A description of the procedures for the conduct of the hearing;

(5) The name, address, and telephone number of the representative of the authority and of the defendant;

(6) An opportunity for a settlement conference or proposals of adjustment through alternative dispute resolutions, if not already explored; and

(7) Such other matters as the presiding officer deems appropriate.

**§ 1264.112 Parties to the hearing.**

(a) The parties to the hearing shall be the defendant and the authority.

(b) Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3730(c)(5), a private plaintiff under the False Claims Act, as amended, may participate in these proceedings to the extent authorized by the provisions of that Act. (See section 3 of the False Claims Amendments Act of 1986, Pub. L. 99-562, October 27, 1986.)

**§ 1264.113 Separation of functions.**

(a) The investigating official, the reviewing official, and any employee or agent of the authority who takes part in investigating, preparing, or presenting a particular case may not, in such case or a factually related case—

(1) Participate in the hearing as the presiding officer;

(2) Participate or advise in the initial decision or the review of the initial decision by the authority head, except as a witness or as the authority representative in the administrative or judicial proceedings; or

(3) Make the collection of penalties and assessments under 31 U.S.C. 3806.

(b) The presiding officer shall not be responsible to, or subject to the supervision or direction of, the investigating official or the reviewing official.

(c) Except as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, the representative for the Government must be a member of the legal staff of the authority. Nothing in this paragraph is intended to prevent assistance to the Government representative by attorneys in the NASA organization or other governmental entities.

**§ 1264.114 Ex parte contacts.**

No party or person (except employees of the presiding officer's office) shall communicate in any way with the presiding officer on any matter at issue in

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a case, unless on notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. This provision does not prohibit a person or party from inquiring about the status of a case or asking routine questions concerning administrative functions or procedures.

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**§ 1264.115 Disqualification of reviewing official or presiding officer.**

(a) A reviewing official or presiding officer in a particular case may disqualify himself or herself at any time.

(b) A party may file with the presiding officer a motion for disqualification of a reviewing official or a presiding officer. Such motion shall be accompanied by an affidavit alleging personal bias or other reason for disqualification.

(c) Such motion and affidavit shall be filed promptly upon the party's discovery of reasons for disqualification, or such objections shall be deemed waived.

(d) Such affidavit shall state specific facts that support the party's belief that personal bias or other reason for disqualification exists and the time and circumstances of the party's discovery of such facts. It shall be accompanied by a certificate of the representative of record that it is made in good faith.

(e) Upon the filing of such a motion and affidavit, the presiding officer shall proceed no further in the case until the matter of disqualification is resolved in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(f)(1) If the presiding officer determines that a reviewing official is disqualified, the presiding officer shall dismiss the complaint without prejudice.

(2) If the presiding officer disqualifies himself or herself, the case shall be reassigned promptly to another presiding officer.

(3) If the presiding officer denies a motion to disqualify, the authority head may determine the matter only as part of his or her review of the initial decision upon appeal, if any.

**§ 1264.116 Rights of parties.**

Except as otherwise limited by this part, all parties may—

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(a) Be accompanied, represented, and advised by a representative;

(b) Participate in any conference held by the presiding officer;

(c) Conduct discovery;

(d) Agree to stipulations of fact or law, which shall be made part of the record;

(e) Present evidence relevant to the issues at the hearing;

(f) Present and cross-examine witnesses;

(g) Present oral arguments at the hearing as permitted by the presiding officer; and

(h) Submit written briefs and proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law after the hearing.

**§ 1264.117 Authority of the presiding officer.**

(a) The presiding officer shall conduct a fair and impartial hearing, avoid delay, maintain order, and assure that a record of the proceeding is made.

(b) The presiding officer has the authority to—

(1) Set and change the date, time, and place of the hearing upon reasonable notice to the parties;

(2) Continue or recess the hearing in whole or in part for a reasonable period of time;

(3) Hold conferences to identify or simplify the issues, or to consider other matters, including settlement conferences or other alternative dispute resolution, that may aid in the fair and expeditious disposition of the proceeding;

(4) Administer oaths and affirmations;

(5) Issue subpoenas, requiring the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents at depositions or at hearings, which the presiding officer considers relevant and material;

(6) Rule on motions and other procedural matters;

(7) Regulate the scope and timing of discovery;

(8) Regulate the course of the hearing and the conduct of representatives and parties;

(9) Examine witnesses;

(10) Receive, rule on, exclude, or limit evidence;

(11) Upon motion of a party, take official notice of facts;